

## **The Chicago Bungalow**

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The Chicago bungalow is very humble architecture and one of the most common house types in Chicago. The term bungalow was derived from the Bengali word “bangla.” The bungalow originated in India when it was under British control. The British viewed the bungalows as inferior and would not have considered it a dream house. As time went on the British took an interest in garden pavilions, which seemed ideal for their gardens. Indian agricultural styles gradually became more popular in Britain. Sezincote created some famous Indian architecture designs. The bungalow was introduced to the United States right after the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876. The Philadelphia Centennial was a fair, which displayed new devices and technologies. Then the bungalow started getting wide recognition in the U.S. Bungalow construction began in the East and then it spread to the West.

Chicago's bungalow production started because of the population growth spurt in the 1800s. The extra number of people made cramped apartments and other living areas. Then, Jane Addams stepped in, saying that the homes were unsanitary and health threatening. Architects responded by creating the bungalow. Numerous bungalows were built in Chicago from 1910 to 1940. Bungalows made people move away from neighborhoods at the core of the city to the outer skirts. The bungalow was also stylish and affordable.

There are a lot of architectural styles for the bungalow throughout the nation. The styles include Queen Anne, California, Craftsman, Mission Tudor, Prairie, Foursquare, Pueblo, Log Cabin, Colonial, Chicago style, Cape Cod, and Moderne styles. The style that the Chicago bungalows had was Chicago style. The Chicago style has lots of glass that is leaded or stained. Brick is the favorite material. Each bungalow almost touches the adjacent house. The roof is

also made of tiles. I have seen one of these bungalows and describe them here. The living room has a curve where the windows were, and there were lots of them. The windows were stained, and there were lots of bedrooms. Two of them were at the bottom and the other two were on the top floor. The dining room connects to the living room and kitchen. The rooms had lots of pictures. The basement is long, but not wide. The backyard is small because the owners use most of the backyard space for a parking garage. It is not exactly a glamorous and luxurious home style. Still, to Americans in the 1800s, after living in cramped apartments, a bungalow seemed like a mansion. The Americans also felt pride and independence knowing they owned a house.

There is also another kind of bungalow found in Chicago. It is not as common as the Chicago Bungalow yet it is still popular. It is the Prairie style bungalow. It is two stories high, has a flat chimney, and uses prints resembling Japanese linear prints. Like other bungalows, the Prairie style has lots of windows. The architect responsible for this type of bungalow is Frank Lloyd Wright. His early works were creating bungalows, specifically in the Prairie style. Wright was born in June 8, 1876, Richland Center, Wisconsin. As a boy his mother wanted him to be an architect. Wright went to the University of Wisconsin to study civil engineering. He was later hired as a draftsman in the Chicago architectural firm. He moved up in rank and soon started his own firm. He worked hard and drew outlines for many buildings. These included Falling Water, Taliesin West, and the Price Tower.

Additions were often made to the bungalows since they frequently lacked space for large families. For example, one California bungalow, built in 1915, had a kitchen and bathroom added after it was built. Additions also occurred when the owners wanted to have a better looking house from the interior and exterior. Bungalows were sometimes bulldozed for more

modern types of homes. This is one reason why Mayor Richard Daley created a financial plan for bungalow owners. He hopes to preserve the natural beauty of the bungalow. Why? He had grown up in a bungalow in Bridgeport and had grown to love the bungalow.

Bungalows are disappearing fast, since they are being bulldozed for modern houses. Daley's plan is intended to help preserve the look of the bungalow from the outside while making the interior more modern. James Wirth, for example, found a bungalow at 6548 N. Fairfield. The interior looked the same as it did in 1922, and the attic also had the blueprints for the house. The original features of the bungalow remained, including the walls, windows, staircases, plumbing and radiators. The bungalow was then renovated at a low cost.

Bungalows are among the oldest parts of Chicago's neighborhood. They are part of Chicago's history and should be preserved. [From "What style is my bungalow? American Bungalow," [www.ambungalow.com](http://www.ambungalow.com) (Oct. 25, 2003); Brenda Rotzoll, "Bungalows Connect to Past," *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 26, 2003; Dominic Pacyga and Charles Slanabruch, *The Chicago Bungalow*; Gary Washburn, "Daley's New Crusade: Save Bungalow Belt," *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 26, 2003; Leland Roth, "Frank Lloyd Wright," <http://www.worldbookonline.com/wbol/wbAuth/jsp/wbArticle.jsp?/na/ar/co/ar611020.htm> (Nov. 8, 2003).]